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THE WHITE HOUSE

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PRESS BRIEFING  
BY PRESS SECRETARY SARAH SANDERS  
AND PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL  
OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY DIVISION ED O'CALLAGHAN

James S. Brady Press Briefing Room

1:16 P.M. EST

MS. SANDERS: Good afternoon. Let me start by previewing some of the President's plans for the rest of the week.

Tomorrow, he will travel to H&K Equipment company near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. H&K began as a small family business a half-century ago. 2017 was the best year in company history, which they credit to the President's pro-jobs, pro-worker, pro-growth economic agenda.

Thanks to the passage of the Trump tax cuts, H&K will now be able to expense 100 percent of the investments they make in new equipment in the same year they buy it. According to H&K, this means their investments back into the company will be 50 percent higher than this last year. That means millions of dollars will be invested in growing their business rather than propping up the bloated government in Washington.

When they buy more trucks and equipment for their rental fleet, they hire more technicians to service them, buy more service vehicles to transport those techs from customer site to customer site, and buy more parts from their suppliers to keep the rental fleet running. All of this economic activity spurred by the tax bill will result in more jobs, higher wages, and a brighter future.

The President looks forward to spending time with some of the workers who are reaping the benefits of the tax cuts and reforms, and we know this is just the beginning.

On Friday, we're excited to announce that the President will become the first sitting President to address the March for Life from the White House live via satellite. This will take place from the Rose Garden. The President is committed to protecting the life of the unborn, and he is excited to be part of this historic event.

Now we have a guest here with us today from the Department of Justice. Ed O'Callaghan is here to discuss the Section 11 report, which was released yesterday by the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security.

I won't steal Mr. O'Callaghan's thunder, but this report highlights the urgent need for Congress to adopt the immigration reforms identified in the administration's priorities.

I'll bring him up now so he can make a statement, answer a couple of questions. And as usual, I know you will all be on your best behavior and ask him questions on this topic only. And then I will be happy to come back up and answer other questions on news of the day.

Ed.

MR. O'CALLAGHAN: Good afternoon. My name is Ed O'Callaghan, and I am the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Justice Department's National Security Division.

In my capacity as Principal Deputy, I assist the Acting Assistant Attorney General in the supervision of the 350 dedicated investigators and prosecutors who carry out the Department's highest priority: protecting the United States from threats to our national security.

I've been with the National Security Division since November of last year. Previously, from 1999 to 2008, I was an assistant United States attorney in the Southern District of New York. From 2005 to 2008, I was co-chief of the Terrorism and National Security Unit in the Southern District of New York. And some of the cases I worked on, of course, during that time included the investigation into the 9/11 attacks that occurred while I was an assistant United States attorney in the Organized Crime and Terrorism Unit of the Southern District of New York.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today about yesterday's release of the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security's Section 11 report. The report, titled after Section 11 of President Trump's Executive Order 13780, Protecting the Nation from Terrorist Entry into the United States, was a collaborative effort between the DOJ and DHS to respond to E.O. 13780's directive to provide information to the American people regarding the number of foreign

nationals charged with or convicted of terrorism-related offenses or removed from the United States based on terrorism-related or other national security reasons.

The Justice Department's National Security Division maintains a list of individuals convicted of international terrorism-related charges in U.S. federal courts between September 11, 2001 and December 31 of 2016. As indicated in the report, as of December 31 of 2016, there are 549 individuals on that list of convictions of terrorism -- international terrorism-related offenses.

A subsequent DHS analysis of those 549 individuals convicted of international terrorism-related offenses determined that approximately 73 percent -- or 402 of these 549 individuals -- were foreign-born. A further breakdown of the U.S. citizenship status of these individuals at the time of their respective convictions shows that 254 were not United States citizens, 148 were foreign-born, naturalized, and received U.S. citizenship, and 147 were U.S. citizens by birth.

I'll point out that one of the cases that's highlighted in the Section 11 report refers to a defendant who we convicted in the Southern District of New York named Uzair Paracha. Mr. Paracha came into the United States, I believe, in 1980 as a family member of a legal permanent resident. Mr. Paracha was ultimately convicted of providing material support to al-Qaeda. It's a case that I supervised when I was chief of the terrorism unit in the Southern District of New York.

The evidence in that trial showed that Mr. Paracha attempted to assist other individuals who were affiliated with al-Qaeda to try to enter the United States based on false statements in immigration documents. And in fact, Paracha assisted and took on the persona of one of the individuals who he was attempting to try to get back into the United States to commit terrorist acts here.

The individual statements provided by that individual demonstrated that he was attempting to come back into the United States to commit attacks on gas stations in New York -- my hometown. And by the fact that we were able to prosecute Paracha, it stopped that attempt to engage in additional terrorist attacks here in the United States.

Additional items included in your report demonstrate that the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement provided information that shows that there have been approximately 1,716 removals of aliens since September 11, 2001, because of national security concerns -- a designation that is determined by ICE, within the Department of Homeland Security.

Obviously, there are certain times where, although there are national security concerns about foreign-born individuals who are in the United States, a federal prosecution, for one reason or another, is not the suitable way to go about dealing with the threat posed by that individual. So the immigration authorities have other tools at their

disposal -- one of them being the removal tool, which is cited by ICE in the Section 11 report.

It is the case that the threats to our national security are not showing any signs of relenting. In Fiscal Year 2017 alone, DHS encountered 2,554 individuals on terrorist watch lists, formerly known as the FBI's Terrorist Screening Database. Those individuals were, of course, attempting to get into the United States.

Additional important statistics provided by DHS and documented in the report include the fact that between October 1, 2011 and September 30, 2017, a total of 355,345 noncitizen offenders were administratively arrested after previously being convicted of an aggravated felony or two or more crimes, each punishable by more than one year, a regular felony.

During that same time period, according to DHS, 372,098 noncitizen offenders were removed from the United States after conviction of an aggravated felony or two or more felonies.

And between Fiscal Year 2010 and Fiscal Year 2017, Customs and Border Protection -- CBP -- identified and prevented the boarding of 73,261 foreign travelers on flights destined from the United States who may have presented an immigration or security risk.

In a statement yesterday about the report, Attorney General Sessions indicated that there are currently thousands of terrorism-related investigations into thousands of people in the United States, including hundreds of people who came here as refugees.

In addition, citing surveys previously commissioned by DOJ components, the report noted that there are an estimated 23 to 27 honor killings every year in the United States, and that there are an estimated approximately half-a-million women and girls in the United States at risk of undergoing the abhorrent practice of female genital mutilation.

In October of last year, the Trump administration laid out a series of immigration policy objectives to ensure safe and lawful admission to the United States, defend the safety and security of our country, and to protect American workers and taxpayers.

There are three pillars to this immigration policy: border security, immigration enforcement, and a merit-based immigration system. From the cases I have worked on, I know that foreign terrorist organizations, transnational criminal organizations, and other individuals and entities that wish to harm the United States undoubtedly seek to exploit weaknesses in our immigration system when it benefits them in accomplishing their unlawful schemes.

President Trump's immigration policy is designed to serve the interests of national security. Enhanced vetting and screening and continuing screening promote the discovery of information that would

help immigration and law enforcement authorities identify foreigners who may pose national security threats to the American people.

Rather than basing admission decisions on programs that lack accountability, like diversity visa lotteries and extended family chain migration, adopting a merit-based system rewards skills and qualities that include but are not limited to education, English-language proficiency or fluency, and/or job skills.

As a prosecutor tasked with protecting our nation's security, I know some of our cases have involved exploitation of vulnerabilities in our current immigration system. The Attorney General is committed to restoring law and order in our immigration system so that we can address and work to eliminate the vulnerabilities that can be exploited by those seeking to undermine our public safety.

Those are my brief remarks. I'm happy to take some questions. Sir, in the middle.

Q Thank you. Do you find it alarming that more than 25 percent of the people convicted of international terrorism-related charges were natural-born U.S. citizens? And what is the administration doing to address that issue?

MR. O'CALLAGHAN: So the Department of Justice's enforcement of the international terrorism laws are focused on the conduct of -- that is found to be committed by individuals no matter where they're born. The statistics that you have -- for the first time, compiled in this way, in response to the executive order and the directives therein -- demonstrate that the international terrorism offenses that we have prosecuted in the National Security Division and achieved convictions on, that they're 73 percent foreign-born.

We're going to prosecute anyone that we can make cases against that are posing threats to the national security of the United States. The statistics that are brought before you in the Section 11 report respond directly to the directive in the executive order about international terrorism offenses and those are the statistics that my division -- the national security division -- keep.

Q Thank you, thank you sir. My question is --

MR. O'CALLAGHAN: You're next.

Q Yeah. Very simply this: Has there been any change in the administration's stated policy about using Guantanamo in dealing with international terrorists at all?

MR. O'CALLAGHAN: I'm not aware of any change in the administration's stated use of Guantanamo. The administration is committed to enforcing our terrorism laws and any law that we can against anyone who will present harm or threats to the United

States. There are considerations as to how any potential case may be addressed so that any threat that is posed by any individual is neutralized.

The administration and Attorney General Sessions are committed to consider all options as to how we can neutralize any threats posed by anyone that may fall into a terrorism category.

Q But Guantanamo is still going to be around for a while, and there's no plans to close it at all?

MR. O'CALLAGHAN: I'm not aware of any administration plans with respect to Guantanamo. I can tell you it's still around.

Sir.

Q Thank you. I'm hoping you can explain some of your logic here a little a further because you talked about the immigration system and reforming the immigration system to protect Americans in the United States. But, a lot of the crimes that you're using as examples to justify changing the immigration system are crimes that were attempted crimes or would have taken place outside the United States -- people wanting to travel outside the United States to fight, providing support to fighters outside the United States.

And I understand there's a nexus there with U.S. forces in those regions, but the point is to reform the immigration system to protect Americans. Can you provide more information, more statistics that show doing so would have prevented people from coming in who committed more crimes inside the United States? Do you have maybe better examples that fit what you're trying to say?

MR. O'CALLAGHAN: So a few points to that: One is, this is the first iteration of this report in response to the executive order's directives, and we, in working together with DHS, certainly expect to have more statistics and address some of the issues we weren't able to address in this initial report in future iterations of this report.

In terms of the cases that are reported, I mean, if you do look at the cases, some of which are included in the Section 11 report, there are certainly cases that relate to conduct that has been committed in the United States -- conduct that is in support of, for instance, al Qaeda or ISIS.

So, there are plenty of examples of conduct that was actually committed in the United States which would, in a way that we define it, qualify as an international terrorism investigation because it relates to a foreign terrorist organization or terrorism conduct.

So secondly -- I mean thirdly, I would say, of course we're trying to prevent, through any way we can -- and the administration of course supports us -- we're trying to prevent terrorist attacks. And so the

most successful prosecution that I've ever been involved with are ones where we actually are able to stop it at conspiratorial stage so that there are individuals who, clearly, through their conduct and their activity and what they're saying, are agreeing to commit a terrorist act in furtherance of the goals of a foreign terrorist organization.

But we, in conjunction with our law enforcement partners, are able to prevent it, convict them, and then they'll be included in our international terrorism offenses.

Q I understand that, sir. I'm just trying to figure out -- and maybe I'm not understanding this -- how preventing people from coming in who were conspiring, for instance, to go fight in Syria would have protected people in the United States. These were international terrorism crimes and they weren't all planning attacks in the United States; they were planning things overseas. And you want to reform the immigration system, and it seems like the focus there should be on things that people did in the United States to people in the United States.

MR. O'CALLAGHAN: So, the administration -- immigration or -- reforms focus on getting more information. Enhanced screening, enhanced vetting, more information, more agents, more officers asking more questions, more prosecutors prosecuting more cases.

All of that, in conjunction with all the other national security efforts by the administration will lead to a safer United States. I firmly believe that. And I know that the fact that there are individuals, here in the United States, that are willing to, in support of ISIS-related philosophies, engage in and talk about engaging in committing acts here in the United States that we're able to prevent -- I think that that makes the American people safer and I know the Trump administration does.

Q Sir, given that the discussion today is focused on national security, which is your area, I'd like to ask about national security as it relates to the arrest recently of that ex-CIA agent, Mr. Lee. Can you talk about the significance of that arrest? And why action was not taken against him sooner?

MR. O'CALLAGHAN: So that -- I will say that that is a very important arrest, as demonstrated in the complaint that was unsealed related to that case. That former-CIA officer retained classified information.

As that case proceeds through the courts, I would expect that more information about the conduct that underlies those charges in the complaint will come out, but as of now, I've just -- that case was investigated before I came to the National Security Division. It's an important case. It goes to illegal retention of classified information, and so he is going to be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

Q One more on the report? One last point.

MR. O'CALLAGHAN: Sure.

Q Yesterday, when the report was released, the White House put out a factsheet that said it found that approximately 3 out of 4 individuals convicted of international terrorism-related charges in the time period studied are foreign-born individuals who entered the United States through our immigration system.

My understanding was that those numbers that you cited to us included people who have been extradited here to face trial, which is to say, they didn't enter through our immigration system. So my question is: Is that correct? And if so, how many of the three-quarters were actually immigrants?

MR. O'CALLAGHAN: so the data that is included focuses on foreign-born individuals who were -- well, it's all the international terrorism offenses. Just so you're clear, the international terrorism offenses is something that is categorized by the National Security Division based on specific provisions of the United States Attorney's Manual.

I don't want to get too many details, but there are two categories of offenses. Category One offenses, that list code -- sections of the Federal Criminal Code that are -- they're, in and of themselves, labeled international terrorism offenses.

Then there are Category Two offenses that do not qualify as Category One offenses. But those offenses are committed and individuals are convicted of those offenses -- like false statements, or obstruction of justice -- that are committed in a course of an international terrorism investigation. And so those are the ones that are reported in the 549, some of which include foreign-born, some of which include foreign-born but naturalized U.S. citizens, and some of that include U.S. citizens.

There is undoubtedly, because I've been involved in a lot of the cases -- a certain number of those foreign-born individuals who have been brought into the United States by extradition or otherwise to face charges.

But the underlying important fact about those cases is that we were able to prove that those individuals committed terrorism offenses against the United States, and are now serving either life sentences or very long sentences that will neutralize their threat to the United States going forward because we were able to convict them under an international terrorism statute here in the United States.

Thank you all.

MS. SANDERS: Thank you, Mr. O'Callaghan. We'll save time and we'll jump straight into questions today.



Sagar, go ahead.

Q Great. Sarah, there have been some suggestions in the media today that the President does, in fact, suffer from heart disease, and his weight is larger than was indicated yesterday. Does the White House stand by Dr. Jackson's report?

MS. SANDERS: Absolutely. Dr. Jackson has been a White House physician for the last 12 years, trusted by Presidents Bush, President Obama, and now President Trump. He is the only doctor that has weighed in on this matter that has actually examined the President.

And so I think a doctor that has spent the amount of time with the President as Dr. Jackson has is not only the most qualified, but the only credible source when it comes to diagnosing any health concerns. And we support what he said yesterday 100 percent -- that the President is in excellent health.

And I think he exhausted just about every question that you guys had, and showed probably that he's in pretty good health, too, to stand up here for an hour and take questions. (Laughter.)

John.

Q Not too long ago, Senator Jeff Flake of Arizona took the Senate Floor to again denounce the President -- this time likening him to Stalin in his approach toward the media, saying that he's inspired dictators the world over. This is of a pair with the statement from Senator John McCain, saying that the President should stop attacking the press. At some point today, you're supposed to give out fake news awards. What do you think of what Senators Flake and McCain have said? And what's up with the awards?

MS. SANDERS: In response to Senator Flake specifically, I found it quite interesting that he is coming out to attack this President considering he's the one that was recently defending an actually oppressive regime. He went to Cuba a few weeks ago and served as a mouthpiece for the oppressive Cuban government.

He's not criticizing the President because he's against oppression; he's criticizing the President because he has terrible poll numbers, and he is, I think, looking for some attention.

I think it's unfortunate, and certainly I think our position here at the White House is that we welcome access to the media every day. I'm standing right here taking questions. The President does so regularly. And to act as if we're anything but open to that back-and-forth exchange is utterly ridiculous.

Q What about following on what Senator McCain said, and then the awards that I asked you?

MS. SANDERS: I haven't had a chance to read all of what Senator McCain said.

Q And the awards?

MS. SANDERS: We'll keep you guys posted. It will be something later today.

Margaret.

Q We'll be looking for that.

MS. SANDERS: I know you're all waiting to see if you are big winners, I'm sure. (Laughter.)

Q Indeed.

There's been frustration from both Republicans and Democrats who were in the room yesterday with Steve Bannon when he was being asked about some of the claims that he's made about this administration and the President's family. But specifically, some of the criticism has been aimed at the White House because of guidance that has supposedly been given as to what can and cannot be said -- specific topics that are off-limit and the scope of executive privilege.

Without getting into the details of that, can you at least define for us what the White House is telling attorneys falls into the scope of executive privilege here?

MS. SANDERS: Yeah, I can tell you that this White House is following the same practice that many White Houses before us have that have gone back decades, that there is a process that you go through. Any time you have congressional inquiries touching upon the White House, the Congress should consult with the White House prior to obtaining confidential material. This is part of a judicial-recognized process. We want to follow through that.

We've been fully cooperative with the ongoing investigations, and we're going to continue to do so. And we encourage the committees to work with us to find the appropriate accommodation in order to ensure Congress obtains all the information that they're looking for. But there's a process that this works through.

And it's not just isolated to this instance. Executive privilege is something that goes back decades because it's something that needs to be protected. Whether it's during this administration or one 20 years from now, we want to make sure we follow the process and the precedent, and that's all that's taking place here.

Q But what about allegations that the scope of that executive privilege -- not just the time in the administration, but time after it

and time during the transition -- is broader than it has been in past administrations? Is that accurate?

MS. SANDERS: I can't speak to the details on that. I can simply talk about the process and that we're following the same process and past practice of previous administrations.

Q And are there off-limits categories that the White House is --

MS. SANDERS: Again, I can't get into the details. I can only discuss the process.

Ashley.

Q Thank you. Following on that question, there is news report today that Steve Bannon's attorney was relaying the questions he was asked by the Senate Intel Committee in real time to the White House. So my questions are, who was he relaying the questions to? Is that something the White House specifically asked his attorney to do? And if so, why did the White House think that was a necessary step in handling Bannon's testimony?

MS. SANDERS: That's the same process that is typically followed. Sometimes they actually have a White House attorney present in the room. This time it was something that was relayed via phone, and, again, was following standard procedure for an instance like this and something that will likely happen again on any other number of occasions, not just within this administration, but future administrations.

Jordan.

Q Thanks, Sarah. The House Republican leadership is proposing a funding bill that would provide the government funding through February 16th and reauthorize CHIP for six years. Is that a proposal that the White House supports?

MS. SANDERS: We do support the short-term CR. However, that's not our first choice. We'd still like to see a clean funding bill, a two-year budget deal, but we do support the short-term CR. But we're going to continue moving forward in that process.

Q Sarah, does the President think it's acceptable for Republicans or Democrats to allow a government shutdown at the end of the week? And you know -- obviously, different options here, but does he think it's acceptable for a shutdown to occur this week?

MS. SANDERS: The President certainly doesn't want a shutdown, and if one happens I think you only have one place to look and that's to the Democrats who are holding our military and our national security hostage by trying to push through other policies that have nothing to do with the budget.

We would like to, again, get a budget deal done -- a two-year budget deal, a clean budget deal -- and then focus on negotiations, following that deal, with finding a permanent solution to DACA and responsible immigration reform. We've said that many times before. Our position has not changed.

Q But Republicans control Congress, they control the White House. Isn't it your responsibility?

MS. SANDERS: It takes 60 votes, and Republicans don't have 60 votes. So Democrats either need to decide that they're going to come here to do their jobs, and they're going to govern, and they're going to put our national security ahead of their own personal, political agendas, or they're not. It's really simple.

And that's a decision you're going to have to ask the Democrats what's more important -- national security or political agendas. I can't answer that for you.

Cecilia.

Q Thanks, Sarah. You just said the President certainly doesn't want a shutdown. Last year, he tweeted that a shutdown would be a good thing. So what caused his views to evolve?

MS. SANDERS: He said it would be good politics.

Q A good shutdown is what he said.

MS. SANDERS: Look, that's never been a preference of this administration. It wasn't then; it isn't now. And, again, if that does happen, the blame -- the fault will all lie at one place because we would like to see a budget deal happen.

John.

Q Thank you, Sarah. In an interview last Friday with Newsmax Television, the ambassador of Pakistan, Ambassador Chaudhry, commented on the President's decision to rollback most of the aid for security assistance to the Islamabad government. And he said Pakistan does not want aid but, more importantly, and I quote, "Pakistan wants respect. Pakistan wants recognition of our work and our contribution and our sacrifices." Regarding the President's comment, Pakistan has responded to the aid with, "lies & deceit." He simply said, "We won't dwell on that part because it's not beneficial to either party." Your response to Ambassador Chaudhry?

MS. SANDERS: Look, our position is firm that we believe that withdrawing that aid is important, and I would refer you to the State Department on anything beyond that.

Q And you stand by the "lies & deceit" comment that the President made?

MS. SANDERS: Yes. Hallie.

Q Thank you, Sarah. Two questions. I'm just going to follow up on a couple of my colleagues' questions here on the negotiations. But on the first one about Steve Bannon -- understood your points about process and how this all works, but sort of, broadly, is the White House afraid of what Steve Bannon might say in these interviews?

MS. SANDERS: Not that I'm aware of. I think we've been pretty clear what our position is in regards to this entire process, that there was absolutely no collusion. But in terms of what he might say, I can't answer that; I can't speculate on that. I can simply tell you that we're following the procedure, whether it was in this committee or any other committee down the road. This is a process that's important to protect, and that's what we're doing.

Q And on negotiation, the President has talked about wanting to find a bipartisan solution. You said you want the Democrats to come to the table. If there is a government shutdown in, what, three days from now, does the buck stop with President Trump?

MS. SANDERS: I'm not sure how it would. The President has laid out what he wants. He wants a budget deal. He wants to have Republicans and Democrats agree on a budget. And we're happy to talk about other things, but the budget should not be tied to a political agenda that the Democrats are driving. Those are two very separate things.

Mike.

Q There is a -- some legal experts are suggesting that the subpoena for Bannon shows this investigation becoming more aggressive instead of winding down. A couple questions. Is the President prepared for this investigation to last into the months to come? And following up on Hallie, would you encourage Bannon to tell all, like his camp is saying he will, to Mueller?

MS. SANDERS: Look, as we've said, regardless of who it is, we're going to be fully cooperative with the Special Counsel, and encourage everybody involved in the process to be fully cooperative.

The first part of your question is, "Are we prepared?" I think we've been dealing with this hoax for the better part of a year. If we have to endure the ridiculousness for another month, we can certainly handle it. Do the American people deserve that? No, I don't think they do.

Steven.

Q Just in the interest of clarity, you've spoken of how the White House Counsel's Office has been involved in this process up on the Hill. Has the White House, to this point, actually asserted executive privilege? Or are you talking about the potential that --

MS. SANDERS: I'm talking about the process. I can't go any further than that.

Q One question on the CR. You speak of how the President would like to see a short-term CR passed. Is he going to lean on the fellow Republicans who are in the House Freedom Caucus to see to it that they vote for it?

MS. SANDERS: Like I just said, we support the short-term CR. Our preference is the longer, two-year budget deal, but we support the short-term.

Q So the answer would be yes, that he will encourage the House Freedom Caucus to vote for it?

MS. SANDERS: Yes. Like I said, we support the short-term and think it is certainly better than not having that and having a government shutdown as the alternative. But again, our preference would be a longer-term deal.

Blake.

Q Sarah, when you look at the calendar, then -- January 17th -- the budget deal, potentially that goes to February 16th; the DACA expiration is up March 5th. Does the President want to see a DACA deal get struck before the next CR would end? Or is he willing to potentially take this up to the deadline in early March?

MS. SANDERS: Look, I think what we'd like to see happen is, let's make a budget deal by Friday, and then let's come back to work aggressively on Monday and make a deal on DACA and responsible immigration reform. We'd like to do all of those things and we'd be happy to do them quickly if Democrats are willing to work with us and get onboard.

Q You also are rolling out an infrastructure plan this month. So if the CR gets passed this week, is priority number one next week DACA or trying to get support together for infrastructure?

MS. SANDERS: Look, we very much want to get a deal done on DACA. That's a big priority for us right now, but we can certainly manage more than one thing at a time, as we're used to doing around here. And if infrastructure gets rolled out by the end of the month, or the first part of next month, we'll certainly be working on that as well.

Kristen.

Q Sarah, thank you. This weekend, President Trump is planning to go to Florida and apparently some celebrations for the one-year anniversary of his inauguration. Is that appropriate if there is, in fact, a government shutdown? Or would he consider changing his plans?

MS. SANDERS: Again, we hope that Republicans and Democrats will come together and that we'll have a budget deal. We still are focused on that being our top priority. If that doesn't happen and there's a schedule change, we'll certainly let you guys know.

Q How does he see his role, Sarah, in getting the ball over the finish line? I know you're pointing the finger at Democrats, but bottom line -- he's the President. So how does he plan to make sure this government stays open?

MS. SANDERS: Look, we're doing everything we can to encourage members from both sides to make sure that we get a deal. The President has made very clear that his number-one priority is our national security and fully funding our military. And that would be, obviously, something of utmost importance. And I would think that Democrats should share that same passion and priority as the President, and hopefully we don't have to go through this process come Friday.

I'll take one last question. Toluse, go ahead.

Q Thank you, Sarah. North Korea and South Korea have agreed to march together during the Winter Olympics in the opening ceremony under a unified Korea flag. Does the President, does the White House support both North Korea and South Korea marching together and coming more closely together during the Olympics?

MS. SANDERS: Look, we see this as an opportunity for the regime to see the value of ending its international isolation by denuclearization. We still are very much focused and hope that that happens.

This isn't the first time that the two countries have marched together, and we hope that this experience gives North Korea and its athletes a small taste of freedom, and that rubs off and is something that spreads and impacts in these negotiations and in these conversations.

Thanks, guys.

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1:52 P.M. EST

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